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Friday, 30 November 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 36

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/342 and A/67/364)

Draft resolutions (A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like once again to congratulate Palestine on its new status as a non-member observer State in the United Nations, following the Assembly's adoption of its historic resolution 67/19 by a landslide majority, on 29 November.

Today the Assembly will consider the situation in the Middle East in the framework of addressing the conflict in the region, which is the result of Israel's occupation of Arab territories since 1967 and its refusal to accept the will of the international community and to abide by international law and by international humanitarian law, as well as by resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, despite international and regional efforts to arrive at a peaceful, lasting and just settlement for the question of Palestine.

In the past few years, Israel's violations of international law, human rights and international humanitarian law have increased in the occupied Palestinian territories, as has become apparent in Israel's recent assault on Gaza. Moreover, the occupation authorities are continuing their oppressive policies, which include the detention of thousands of Palestinians and holding them in prison and detention centres without any legitimate grounds. The construction of the racial separation wall also continues, in contravention of international law. The oppressive siege of Gaza goes on, in blatant violation of resolution ES-10/18 and Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). There also continue to be checkpoints in the West Bank, as well as other violations and contraventions that cannot all be mentioned within the time we have.

Regrettably, all those practices are related to Israel's deliberate attempt to undermine all efforts to bring about direct negotiations with the Palestinian side. That confirms that Israel does not want to arrive at any peaceful settlement. That will cause extreme harm not only to the Palestinians and Israelis but to all the countries of the region and the entire world.

To express the international community's rejection of Israel's continued occupation and illegitimate practices in the occupied Arab territories, today I introduce to the General Assembly, on behalf of this year's sponsoring States, two draft resolutions under agenda item 36, entitled "The situation in the Middle East". The first draft resolution is entitled "Jerusalem" and the second is entitled "The Syrian Golan".

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The draft resolution on Jerusalem, A/67/L.23, reaffirms the terms of reference constituted by General Assembly and Security Council resolutions pertaining to the status of the occupied territories, especially Jerusalem, which stress that all the illegitimate administrative measures and procedures taken by Israel to impose its laws on Jerusalem are null and void. Moreover, the draft resolution stresses that any just and comprehensive resolution to the issue of Jerusalem must include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure of freedom of belief and religious practice for its inhabitants. There must be an end to settlement activities and to illegal attempts to judaize Jerusalem, which Israel and the Israeli settlers are perpetrating. It also calls for a guarantee to end the continued violations of the Palestinians' right to religious freedom and to end the repeated assaults on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as to end excavation in the Old City, including in and around religious sites.

The second draft resolution, A/67/L.24, pertains to the occupied Syrian Golan. It recalls Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and again expresses the General Assembly's deep concern over Israel's continued non-compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. It reaffirms that the Hague Convention IV of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 apply to the Syrian territory occupied since 1967. It also asserts the illegality of imposing Israeli laws on the Syrian Golan and the illegitimate nature of Israel's settlements there. It demands that Israel withdraw completely from the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. It also calls upon Israel to respect previous arrangements in that regard.

The States sponsoring the two draft resolutions see that the time has come for the international community to deal with the Middle East conflict in an integrated way. The peoples of the region are still suffering from the effects of war and aggression. They look forward to peace, stability and coexistence, which will be achieved only through the political will of the entire international community and by Israel committing to fully withdraw from all occupied Palestinian and Arab land, in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and on the basis of the principle of land for peace and the rules of international law.

For all that to be achieved, we seek the support of all Member States in the General Assembly for the two draft resolutions. We urge everyone here to vote in favour of them, in affirmation of the strength of international will and its adherence to international legitimacy, to an end to occupation and aggression and to the primacy of the noble purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Yesterday, in adopting resolution 67/19, the Assembly extended its overwhelming support to the people of Palestine at yet another historic moment in the history of the United Nations. With that historic vote, Palestine took a great step towards gaining the position it deserves as an independent and sovereign State recognized by the international community. We sincerely hope and believe that that development will lead the way to a just and comprehensive peace and will break the stalemate in the peace process.

Therefore, yesterday's vote should immediately be utilized as new momentum to revitalize the peace talks and Palestinian reconciliation. The recent ceasefire sets the appropriate circumstances for both parties to focus on diplomacy. Today, we should all encourage the parties to take that step. It is our foremost objective to find a solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We all have to be sure about one fact. The stalemate is neither sustainable nor acceptable. The recent operation in Gaza, resulting in the loss of many innocent civilian lives, was testimony to that. Needless to say, illegal settlement activities and the ongoing blockade on Gaza, for over five years, seriously harm the prospects for peace in the future. Therefore we repeat our calls for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) to end the restrictions on the inhabitants of Gaza, which affect their basic human rights each and every day.

Along with our international partners, we will resolutely maintain our efforts for Palestine to be granted United Nations membership in the near future and will continue to defend the just cause of the Palestinian people.

The situation in Syria continues to be a grave humanitarian crisis. As winter's cold arrives, the humanitarian situation is getting even more dramatic. This morning we heard in detail from Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, that the crisis has gone beyond being local and has unfortunately

spilled over into neighbouring countries, whether in the form of cross-border fire or in the massive movement of civilians seeking safety and shelter. Turkey lost five citizens in the town of Akçakale to cross-border shelling. More were injured as a result of stray bullets and shell fragments.

Nevertheless, we shall continue to utilize all our efforts, with the support of the international community, to continue extending our helping hand to the Syrian people. As of today, Turkey hosts 130,449 Syrians in 14 camps with sanitation, health and education facilities. Some 80,000 are residing elsewhere in Turkey, making their way to various cities and towns by their own means. To cope with the increasing numbers, we are building more facilities and trying to meet the humanitarian demand. However, as highlighted by the Secretary-General and the Special Joint Representative this morning, plans for humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria are severely underfunded and require further attention from the international community.

Still, efforts on the humanitarian front are not enough to address the root cause of the crisis. Towards that end, Turkey will continue to support Special Representative Brahimi and the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

The people of the Middle East rightfully deserve a dignified life and the dividends of democracy and peace. Each and every nation will have its own way of addressing the question. Yet the international community's stance in each case should be identical — a staunch support for universal values and principles that uphold human dignity, and respect for unity and territorial integrity.

On that note, allow me to commend the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas and to conclude by congratulating the Palestinian delegation in the Hall, as well as the people of the State of Palestine. Now it is time for all of us to encourage the two States to live side by side in peace.

Mrs. Comesaña Perdomo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba once again congratulates the Palestinian people and leaders on their historic victory yesterday. Cuba believes that this is a further step on the path towards the recognition of a State of Palestine. We call on the Security Council to take a decision in this respect and respond to the demands of the Palestinian people and the majority of the Member States.

The situation in the region, especially in the occupied Palestinian territories, continues to be deplorable. In the Gaza Strip, the most recent escalation of violence unleashed by Israeli military forces left hundreds of innocent victims dead, including women and children, and more than a thousand wounded. Cuba reiterates its serious concern regarding the continuing deterioration of the situation in the region, particularly as a result of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Israel against the civilian Palestinian population and many other illegal policies and practices, such as the expansion of Israeli settlements, the continued violations of human rights and systematic war crimes, which inflict great suffering on the Palestinian people.

Israel's bellicose policy undermines the stability of the entire Middle East and thus international peace. Its lack of respect for international law and its continued illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories and other Arab territories continue to be the major obstacles to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

We repeat the call on the international community to require the Israeli authorities to abstain from any action that would lead to a new escalation of the situation. We demand the immediate lifting of the illegal, cruel and genocidal blockade against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the opening of border crossings and the free circulation of goods to and from that area. Permanent humanitarian access must be guaranteed, as must the implementation of legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In the same vein, we call for an immediate end to the demolition of Palestinian houses, the construction of the wall and the displacement of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem, as well as all other acts of incitement, provocation and illegal aggression carried out by extremist settlers against the Palestinian people and holy sites.

Another obstacle to the achievement of a lasting peace in the region is the ongoing occupation and de facto annexation of the Syrian Golan. Cuba regards as null, void and without legal effect all legislative and administrative measures and actions that Israel has taken or could take with the aim of changing the legal status, physical character or demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan and its institutional structure, as well as Israeli measures to enforce its jurisdiction and administration in that area. Israel's decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its legislation, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan and the illegal settlement construction and expansion activities

in that territory since 1977 constitute a flagrant violation of international law, international conventions and the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

Cuba strongly condemns the brutal Israeli practices in the prisons created since the occupation and reiterates its serious concern about the inhumane conditions experienced by those detained in the occupied Syrian Golan. This has harmed their physical health and put their lives at risk, in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Cuba has closely followed the events in Syria. We reiterate our position on the manoeuvres by certain NATO countries to get the Security Council to legitimize aggression against Syria. In doing so, they are counting on the complicity of major media outlets, which are used to distorting reality and not having to answer for the consequences of their actions. The incitements to violence, military aggression and foreign intervention advocated in some of the press and by high-ranking politicians are cause for serious concern. Cuba denounces those actions aimed at justifying aggression against the Syrian people.

Cuba shares the concern about the loss of innocent lives in Syria, as in any part of the world, and condemns all acts of violence taking place in that country. At the same time, we reiterate our categorical rejection of any type of foreign intervention, whether direct or indirect, including logistical support to irregular armed groups. An intervention by foreign forces in Syria would have serious consequences for international peace and security, in particular for the Middle East. Given the experiences and precedents created by recent cases in which we saw manipulation of the Charter of the United Nations, double standards and flagrant violation of international law, we reiterate our rejection of any attempt to undermine the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The role of the international community in these times of difficulty for a Member State is to provide assistance in order to safeguard peace and stability in that country. We reaffirm our confidence in the capacity of the Syrian people and Government to resolve their internal problems without foreign intervention. We demand full respect for the self-determination and sovereignty of that Arab country.

Cuba reiterates once more its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the provisions of the Arab Peace Initiative, the road map and the principle of land for peace. We reject the attempts to change the mandate of the peace process, and we denounce Israel's implementation of unilateral measures and strategies aimed at imposing an illegal unilateral solution. The Palestinian people have the inalienable right to establish an independent, sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We call for the unconditional return of all Arab territories occupied in June 1977. This is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Please allow me, at the outset, to extend our sincere thanks to my dear colleague, the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for his introduction of draft resolutions A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24, on occupied Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, respectively.

I would also like to begin my statement with a special appeal to all colleagues, in particular those who extend their goodwill to my country, not to discuss the issue of my country, since we are now discussing the situation in the Middle East. As we all know, this is an item that for decades has been mostly concerned with putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. No matter how good the intent, any discussion of the situation in my country at present would distract from the central issue, which is the situation in the Middle East. Those who would like to discuss the issue of the Syrian Arab Republic may do that when the issue of the Syrian Arab Republic is under discussion.

Perhaps it would be useful at the outset to recall that all laws, including international law, are promulgated for the purpose of being implemented, and that the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments were adopted for the purpose of being respected, and that resolutions of the United Nations, particularly those regarding the rejection of foreign occupation of the land of others, were also adopted to be implemented. That is all supposed to be taken seriously and to be applied to all without exception. I do not believe that any representative of a State that joined the Organization for its noble objectives, with a view to establishing international peace and security and justice, would think that he came here to adopt resolutions that later become dead letters or to only invoke certain provisions of international law

when making statements under the auspices of the Organization.

Here we are today, meeting again for perhaps the hundredth time, or maybe the thousandth or ten-thousandth time, to call on Israel to end its occupation of Arab territories, to end its racist and inhumane policies, its violations of international instruments and norms, its feverish settlement campaigns and the systematic killing of civilians in the occupied Arab territories. In spite of the foregoing, in spite of all the appeals of the international community, there has been no progress whatsoever so far in putting an end to Israeli occupation or stopping its politics of aggression.

On the contrary, matters have gotten worse in the light of Israel's flagrant disregard for international legitimacy and for all human and moral values and of its complete disregard for the United Nations resolutions on the issue. In addition, there has been an unprecedented wave of settlement-building and continued escalation of Israeli violence, most recently the aggression against Gaza, threatening the region with catastrophic consequences and raising the spectre of war at the expense of the prospects for peace.

Settlement activities, which have been condemned and declared objectionable legally and internationally, continue. There seems to be acceptable settlement activity pursuant to the policy of fait accompli, and there is settlement activity that is justified in the name of so-called demographic expansion. Then there is settlement activity that is maintained for the purpose of negotiating exchange for other lands, and there is blind, indiscriminate settlement activity that is subject to negotiations. There is also settlement activity that is not to be discussed because it touches on the sanctity of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Even internationally and legally condemned and rejected settlement activity has become, for some, a negotiable issue.

The manner in which the United Nations and its Member States have dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict can no longer be a routine act of solidarity without serious activity and tangible results. Israel's intransigence and the support it gets from certain countries should not lead to an admission of failure by the United Nations to uphold its duties pursuant to the Charter and its own resolutions. If that were to happen, it would lead to catastrophic consequences for our peoples and our region, and it would also undermine the United Nations in its entirety.

In that connection, we would like to note that transferring the issue of peace in the Middle East from the United Nations to the international Quartet has not accomplished anything with respect to the issue at hand. In some ways, it has diminished the role of the United Nations and paralysed it, transferring its leading role to suspect mediators whose role is confined to providing blind support to Israel and continued justification for that country's criminal behaviour and aggression. There has not been a single meeting of the Quartet during the current session of the General Assembly or even during the Israeli aggression against Gaza. For that matter, the United Nations itself failed to hold even a single meeting during the recent Israeli aggression against Gaza.

More than 45 years have passed since Israel occupied the Syrian Golan. However, those long years do not seem to be enough for Israel to abide by relevant United Nations resolutions that require it to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and to cease its systematic and serious violations of human rights and the policies of terror, oppression, racial discrimination and arbitrary arrest of Syrian citizens suffering under the yoke of occupation in the Syrian Golan. Those policies place restrictions on all aspects of their lives, including their right to stay in contact with their motherland, Syria. Matters have reached the point where the Israelis have put a 2-year-old child under house arrest and separated him from his mother, a student at Damascus University, because she gave birth to him in Syria. When she took him back to the Golan, that Syrian child of the age of 2 did not have the right to go to the Golan, in the view of the Israelis.

The Israeli occupation authorities continue their feverish settlement activities in the Golan and have built an apartheid wall east of the Syrian city of Majdal Shams and refuse to turn over maps of landmines planted in the Golan territories to international organizations, including our Organization. The explosions of cluster bombs and mines planted by the Israelis in the Golan have so far taken the lives of 726 Syrians, 227 of whom were children, most recently two children who lost their lives early last month due to the explosion of a mine.

We have informed the Secretariat of all those violations, the most recent of which is an increase in the number of kidnappings of Syrian citizens from the

Syrian side of the disengagement area by the Israeli occupying forces. Things have become so serious that Israel is now supporting armed terrorist groups that are spreading east of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force area of operation. It is truly regrettable that in spite of all of the documented Israeli crimes and the United Nations resolutions condemning those crimes without reservation, the Israeli civilian and military authorities continue to avoid international accountability, thanks to the illegitimate immunity permitted them by certain States.

Certainly, it was noticed by all who were present in this Hall yesterday that the officials of the occupying Israeli Government justified their objection to the according of United Nations non-member observer State status to Palestine by stating that if Palestine were accorded its full right to membership, it would later become possible for the Palestinian State to pursue claims against Israeli war criminals before the International Criminal Court. That was the justification for their objection, and thus their admission proves that they truly are war criminals.

Perhaps it is clear to all that the illegitimate immunity the Zionists have enjoyed since they took over Palestine has acted as a green light that has not changed to date. Rather, that green light has allowed the Israeli leaders to continue their intransigence and their escalated crimes of aggression. It has prompted us not only to condemn the Israeli occupying authorities, but also to place responsibility, clearly, on the shoulders of certain influential States that ensure Israel's immunity and provide it with protection and cover in international forums, including in the Security Council and within the Quartet. It has exposed the politics of double standards used by those States, as well as their unprecedented hypocrisy in terms of certain noble issues, such as protection of civilians, promotion of human rights, respect for international law and the implementation of United Nations resolutions.

The option of a just and comprehensive peace will not be possible absent the complete withdrawal by Israel from all of the Arab territories to the borders of 4 June 1967, the establishment of the independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and a just solution to the issue of Palestinian refugees, based on resolution 194 (III) of 1948. All actions must be carried out in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, foremost among them Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), on the occupied Syrian Golan.

In conclusion, I call upon Member States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.23, on occupied Jerusalem, and draft resolution A/67/L.24, on the occupied Syrian Golan, in order to uphold international law and promote the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): Developments over the past few weeks, in particular Israel's attack on the people of Palestine in Gaza, have sparked an international crisis that nearly caused instability and turmoil in the whole region. What deeply concerns my delegation is that despite the gravity of the situation, the Security Council was rendered powerless, not just to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities, but even to decide whether to act or not. We, the international community, cannot allow that to happen again. We cannot remain unwilling to act, as failure to act would demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the current multilateral system, particularly the Security Council and the United Nations.

Time and again, we are faced with the situation in the Middle East, especially the question of Palestine. Malaysia believes that in order to avoid being faced with a similar situation in the future, we need to address the crux of the issue and resolve the conflict once and for all.

Today we are still no closer to resolving the question of Palestine. In fact, if we were to take a closer look, we would find that we are much further away from a peaceful settlement than at any time before, because the situation on the ground has deteriorated. Israel has continued to take all measures to change the demographic features of the occupied territory, systematically displacing Palestinians from the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the same time, the illegal blockade of Gaza continues to suffocate the people.

When will this end? Do not the people of Palestine deserve a better future and to live in dignity?

Israel has continued to violate international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, for far too long. It has continued to ignore international calls to respect, adhere to and abide by the Geneva Conventions and all relevant Security Council resolutions. The international community has not been able to hold Israel accountable for all its deliberate acts of violence.

Instead, Israel continues to act aggressively against Palestinian civilians, and it does so with impunity. I wonder why.

The only way forward is for Israel to respect international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. It should cease all illegal settlement activities and restart negotiations in good faith, which would demonstrate its intention to truly bring an end to the conflict. It must realize and accept that a lasting and just solution to the question on Palestine will not only benefit the Palestinians, but would contribute to Israel's own safety and security.

For our part, the international community must reject any further delay in the resumption of peace talks. We must ensure that the parties return to the negotiating table without further delay. We must continue to uphold the principles for the establishment of a Palestinian State under the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Only then can Israelis and Palestinians have any chance for a stable and better future.

I call upon the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to do what they have been mandated to do, namely, to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. Further inaction is not a choice, and time is not on our side.

Malaysia is fully aware of the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. Malaysia will continue to support the restoration of Syrian sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan. We urge Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. All measures and actions undertaken by Israel, including the construction and expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan since 1967, constitute flagrant violations of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The same can be said for the territories of Lebanon under Israeli occupation. We condemn the continued violations and aggression by Israel. We strongly urge Israel to fully implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which calls for a permanent ceasefire, the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, and full respect for the Blue Line. Israel must withdraw from the Shab'a farmlands, the Kafr Shuba hills and the Lebanese part of Ghajar village up to behind the Blue Line.

Yesterday we celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Palestine has been accorded the status of a non-member observer State in the General Assembly. It is something to celebrate, although full membership in the United Nations is the ultimate goal. Malaysia believes that this marks the first step for Palestine towards becoming a sovereign State. In moving forward, we call on all Member States, including the permanent members of the Security Council, to support the admission of Palestine as a full State Member of the United Nations, as that is a legitimate aspiration shared by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people in seeking to restore their legitimate rights as a nation and to establish a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Yesterday, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/19, granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State. That is a further positive development towards the realization of independent Palestinian statehood. The resolution also shows the international community's extensive support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in seeking to restore their legitimate rights.

Dialogue and negotiation are the only viable means for resolving the question of Palestine and Israel. China has always maintained that the two parties should settle their differences through dialogue and negotiation and on the basis of the relevant resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map for peace in the Middle East, so as to achieve the goal of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace.

China is greatly concerned about the continuing deadlock in the peace talks between the two parties. The recent clashes in the Gaza Strip once again demonstrate that the current status quo in the Palestinian question is not sustainable. China calls on both parties, in particular Israel, the stronger Power, to move forward in the general interest of peace, take specific measures to remove obstacles and build mutual trust with the Palestinian side, so as to establish favourable conditions for the early resumption of peace talks and to achieve meaningful progress.

The international community should fully recognize the importance and urgency of the need to promote progress in the Middle East peace process. It should make even greater efforts to support the peace talks. It should urge the two sides to meet each other halfway, so as to overcome the current impasse in the peace talks as soon as possible.

The current humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the other occupied Palestinian territories remains severe. The Palestinian economy is facing serious difficulties. None of the above conditions is conducive to progress in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process or to regional stability. China calls on Israel to fully implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and to remove the blockade on the Gaza Strip, so as to alleviate the humanitarian plight of the inhabitants. The international community should provide more assistance and support to Palestine. China will provide all possible assistance to the Palestinian people.

The Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks are also important components in the Middle East peace process. A comprehensive solution to the Middle East question will not be achieved without fully resolving the issues between the three countries. China firmly supports the legitimate aspirations of Syria and Lebanon to maintain their national sovereignty and territorial integrity and to recover the occupied Palestinian territories. We support the efforts and strategic choices of Member States in seeking a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

China attaches great importance to the Middle East issue and will always support the peace talks and promote progress in the peace process with its own approach. China supports the role of the United Nations in the Middle East issue and stands ready to work together with the parties concerned to play a positive and constructive role in achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East region as soon as possible.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Palestine on the overwhelming support that it received during the voting on resolution 67/19 on the enhancement of its status at the United Nations. I once again wish to express our solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Palestine lies at the core of the Middle East issue. The tragedy of Palestine is a major source of the resentment and desperation that is felt throughout the world, especially in the Muslim world. This meeting is taking place a week after yet another tragic episode in the series of repeated and grave crimes perpetrated by the Zionist regime against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Israeli regime, with unbridled impunity, intensified its military aggression against the Gaza Strip, killing, wounding and maiming Palestinian civilians, including women, the elderly and children. In a statement welcoming the recent ceasefire, the Committee on the Rights of the Child said that the attack by Israel would have a "devastating and lasting impact" on children and stressed that the recent crisis would have long-term psychological effects on young people:

> "This impact extends from a large number of deaths and injuries in Gaza to deep trauma and other psychological effects on children ... These experiences may affect them for many years to come, including into adulthood."

The Israeli regime's deadly air strikes and shelling of Gaza should be considered as part of a broader policy, marked by expansionism, aggression, oppression, collective punishment, extrajudicial killings, targeted assassinations and State terrorism, all in gross violation of international law, as was the act of occupation from the very outset. The recent Israeli crimes in the Gaza Strip would undoubtedly create more instability, serve to inflame tension and threaten to further destabilize the situation in the region. The question is, "How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty?", to quote Bertrand Russell.

The international community should live up to its responsibilities by preventing Israel from continuing to commit atrocities and to flout international law, norms and standards. Regrettably, some powerful Member States that happen to be permanent members of the Security Council have, as a result of their unconditional support for Israel, prevented the Security Council from taking concrete action against the crimes committed by Israel. The obstructionist role played by those same members in the General Assembly, notably yesterday on the issue of upgrading the status of Palestine at the United Nations, was another manifestation of those States' blind support for Israel with regard to preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their legitimate rights. Restrictions by the same States with respect to assistance to Palestine are tantamount to punishing the

Palestinians for exercising their basic rights to shape their fate and future.

In the same vein, the provocative declarations by the Israeli regime concerning the acceleration of construction and the revocation of Palestinian residency rights amount to political extortion of the Palestinian people. Such statements confirm that the Israeli regime has opted for settlement and residency issues as an instrument to block legitimate Palestinian demands. It should be noted that the Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes and property, accompanied by escalating violence by settlers and forced evictions, is seriously exacerbating the situation on the ground.

The humanitarian situation of the Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip, also remains a source of grave concern. That disastrous situation must be ended by calling on the Israeli regime to lift the siege of Gaza and open all border crossings for the movement of goods and persons, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Yesterday we observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The solidarity and support enjoyed by the Palestinian people will undoubtedly have strengthened their steadfastness against injustices and occupation. The result of yesterday's vote on resolution 67/19, granting non-member observer State status to Palestine, showed the extent of the isolation of the Israeli regime. It sent a signal to those who blindly support that illegitimate regime that they seriously need to review their policies and approaches vis-à-vis that regime.

With reference to that resolution adopted yesterday under agenda item 37, and those to be adopted today under agenda item 36, I would like to reiterate once again that the solution to the question of Palestine, which is at the crux of the conflict in the Middle East, lies in compelling the Israeli occupying Power to fully withdraw from the occupied territories and enabling the Palestinian people to return to their land and establish their independent State on the entirety of Palestinian land. The Palestinian people, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, should freely express, through a democratic and peaceful mechanism — a referendum, with the participation of all the inhabitants of Palestine — their opinions regarding their fate and future and the kind of State and Government they want to have. That is the only solution, in our view, for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian crisis.

Before concluding, I would like to place on record that my delegation rejects the baseless allegations raised against my country in this Hall yesterday by the representative of Israel. This is yet another weary practice by the Israeli regime and its advocate to divert the international community's attention from the Israeli crimes in Palestine and elsewhere in the region by raising unfounded allegations against others. I do not want to take up the Assembly's time to respond to those irresponsible claims. However, in the context of Israel's defiance of the international community, I would like to refer to only one aspect of the dangerous behaviour of that regime — the infamous Israeli nuclear weapons programme, which is a showcase of five decades of concealment and deception and of total disregard for the demands of the international community.

Nuclear weapons in the hands of a regime with an unparalleled record of State terrorism and of resorting to aggression and threats of force against other countries present a real threat to regional and global peace and security and to the non-proliferation regime. That threat needs to be urgently and decisively addressed by the international community, and the initiative to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East should be actively pursued.

In that regard, I would like to echo the statement issued yesterday by the Non-Aligned Movement, registering its profound disappointment regarding some of the statements issued by the conveners of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons on mass destruction. Those statements called for a delay in convening the conference, which was scheduled to take place in 2012, out of fear that the conference would further isolate the Israeli regime. We believe that the failure to convene the conference before the end of this year contradicts and violates the collective agreement of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and that it should therefore be held as originally scheduled.

Mrs. Al-Mughairy (Oman): On behalf of the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman, I have the pleasure to express to President Vuk Jeremić our appreciation for the convening of this special meeting to consider the issue of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. My country's delegation would like to convey,

through him, its appreciation to Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal, for his efforts as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and for its report (A/67/35).

I shall address the two items entitled "Question of Palestine" and "The situation in the Middle East".

At the outset, from the international forum of the General Assembly, my country congratulates the Palestinian people on the historic accomplishment yesterday, 29 November, with the Assembly's adoption of resolution 67/19, promoting the State of Palestine to the status of a non-member State in the United Nations. My country hopes that this may lead to other achievements, including the attainment of full membership in the United Nations by the State of Palestine.

There is no doubt that the present meeting is of special importance, as it will consider an issue — the question of Palestine — that is a long-standing challenge to the international community. Meanwhile, the Palestinian people remain under occupation and their situation worsens by the day as a result of the systematic, oppressive practices by the occupying Power. The international community must not remain silent and allow this situation to continue.

We are now in the sixth decade of the occupation, and the displacement and destruction of human beings and infrastructure continues. Yet the proud Palestinian people remain undiscouraged and continue to insist their legitimate rights, represented through the establishment of their independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Government of my country expresses its deep concern at the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories resulting from the continuous Israeli blockade, the imposition of a humanitarian crisis on civilians in the Gaza Strip, the intensive campaign of inhumane and illegal acts in the form of fierce attacks seeking to change the demographic composition of the population and forced displacement of the indigenous people, and the practices of the occupying Power in the noble Al-Quds and around religious sites. In addition, Israeli settlement activities, including the construction of settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem, are intensified and are consistently employed as punitive measures.

This year marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and marks as well the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II), on the division of the land of Palestine into two States, in 1947. The Palestinians are still prevented from exercising their legitimate rights and their national sovereignty — their right of self-determination. This situation has led to the existence of more than 4 million Palestinian refugees suffering from alienation, deprivation and the diaspora.

The Palestinian people depend on the international community to protect them from the inhuman, illegal and arbitrary acts against them by successive Israeli Governments. Hence, the international community should stand in opposition to those practices. They include in particular the embargo on the Gaza Strip launched in 2008, the attack on the freedom convoy transporting humanitarian assistance, which was undertaken to remove the unjust embargo imposed by Israel on Gaza in flagrant violation of human rights, and the war of November 2012, which proves that Israel is not interested in achieving peace.

It is necessary for the international community to send a clear message to Israel to cease those practices and to call for genuine negotiations that will lead to the establishment of security and stability on the basis and principles of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Arab Peace Initiative.

My delegation confirms what was stated in Oman's intervention during the general debate regarding the complexities that arise in any discussion of the question of Palestine at General Assembly sessions (see A/67/PV.19). We are aware of the complexities of those issues. The United Nations has adopted many resolutions and policies, but this issue is still a source of concern and represents a threat of conflict that goes beyond the Middle East.

In this context, my country believes that the role of the United Nations in relation to the question of Palestine should be changed from managing the crisis to seriously pursuing a just and lasting comprehensive political solution that would take into account the interests of the Palestinians and the Israelis, leading to the establishment of the State of Palestine, living side by side with the State of Israel. From that perspective, my country supported the proposal and was among the first sponsors of resolution 67/19, on Palestine's becoming a non-member State at the United Nations. We did so hoping that would usher in a new phase in

the concept of the Palestinian-Israeli relationship, one which could contribute positively to the settlement of this problem.

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman is looking forward to an effective and continuous role of the United States of America, especially after the positive position declared by President Barack Obama during the Assembly's sixty-fifth session, in September 2010 (see A/65/PV.11), which was welcomed by all. My Government invites Israel to seize this opportunity and take advantage of the international momentum in support of direct negotiations to achieve a partnership of peace and security with the Arab countries.

The Sultanate of Oman was one of the first countries to welcome the peace process and considered it a natural and civilized approach to settling differences through dialogue and negotiations. Oman invites the concerned parties to the peace process to play an active role in the settlement of the conflict in the Middle East because of the seriousness of the situation in the region and the crisis witnessed by the region. That will require the Security Council and the Quartet to work more vigorously and urgently for a just and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict, according to the relevant international resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): On the commemorative occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday, the General Assembly adopted historic resolution 67/19, regarding the status of Palestine at the United Nations. Japan has long understood the Palestinians' aspiration to build an independent State and has supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Japan thus endorses a two-State solution under which Israel and a future independent Palestinian State would coexist side by side in peace and security. In the light of that, Japan voted in favour of this resolution.

Japan believes that following the adoption of the resolution, Palestine will bear greater responsibility vis-à-vis the international community. We strongly urge Palestine to make more earnest efforts for the realization of peace in the Middle East. We call on Palestine to immediately resume direct negotiations with Israel in order to move the peace process forward in a tangible way, in cooperation with the international community.

It is not acceptable to use this resolution to act in a way that might negatively affect or hinder direct negotiations with Israel. We ask for prudence with respect to conduct such as accession to international organizations, action which might negatively affect the prospect for the resumption of negotiations.

Israel, for its part, should improve the environment for promoting the resumption of peace negotiations. In particular, settlement activities need to be frozen, as they are a violation of international law.

Japan requests both Palestine and Israel to establish relationships of mutual trust and to promptly return to the negotiating table with a view to realizing a two-State solution. Japan will continue to make an active contribution to moving the Middle East peace process forward, in cooperation with the United States, Arab countries and other partners.

Regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip, Japan welcomes the agreement reached by Israel and the Palestinian armed groups on a ceasefire and strongly hopes that the ceasefire will be a lasting one. Japan had worked to help realize the ceasefire and highly appreciates the mediation efforts by Egypt, the United States of America, the Secretary-General and other relevant countries and organizations. Japan continues to support the efforts of the international community for the stabilization of the Gaza Strip and progress in the Middle East peace process, and provides its utmost cooperation.

With respect to assistance to Palestine, Japanese cooperation has been centred on humanitarian aid, assistance for State-building efforts, confidence-building and enhancing economic self-sustainability. Japan has extended approximately $1.3 billion in total since 1993. In addition, Japan promotes assistance to the Palestinians in cooperation with East Asian countries and is planning to hold the conference on cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian development next February in Tokyo, with East Asian countries and international organizations attending. Japan will actively promote assistance for the building of a future independent, viable Palestinian State.

Let me now touch upon the ongoing situation in Syria. Japan is deeply concerned by the serious and worsening situation in Syria and profoundly deplores the deaths of many thousands of people as a result of the continued violence. Japan reiterates its call on all

parties in Syria to immediately halt the violence and abuses of human rights, and condemns the Syrian authorities for not keeping their own commitments and for not discharging their responsibilities to protect their own citizens. Supporting the diplomatic efforts by the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Japan once again urges the Syrian authorities to cease the violence immediately and to carry out concrete measures for a Syrian-led political transition.

In that regard, Japan welcomes the establishment of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces this month. The Government of Japan hopes that the coalition represents a wide spectrum of Syrian society and will play a role in the common goal of advancing a Syrian-led transition process as early as possible. On that basis, the Government of Japan will provide support to the coalition.

As a part of efforts by the international community to promote the cessation of the violence in Syria, Japan hosted the fifth meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People International Working Group on Sanctions today in Tokyo. The meeting sought to improve the effectiveness of the sanctions implemented by like-minded countries and to broaden the horizons of the countries participating in the sanctions. Japan strongly hopes that the Syrian regime will heed the voice of the international community to stop the violence against its own people.

The Middle East and North Africa have been experiencing a series of movements towards democratization. The Arab Spring was spawned by the people's desire for freedom and democracy. I would like to take this opportunity to renew Japan's commitment to supporting reforms to achieve the transition to democracy in the region.

Mr. Yudha (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on the situation in the Middle East, contained in documents A/67/342 and A/67/364.

Our meeting here today comes against the background of yesterday's historic event, at which the Assembly conferred non-member observer State status on the State of Palestine in adopting resolution 67/19. Indonesia is one of many States Members of this Organization that sincerely believe that the recognition of Palestine as an important component and ally of the international community is something to be proud of, not afraid of.

Indonesia remains convinced of the viability of two States living side by side in peace within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement that includes Lebanon and Syria, and under the terms of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace. To achieve that, however, demands that the parties sit at the negotiating table to hammer out an agreement. And that, unfortunately, is where we continue to be stopped. The reports before us make clear that developments on the ground continue to damage mutual confidence and make the resumption of direct negotiations very difficult, if not impossible. The reports are categorically clear that forward movement is being hampered by the Israeli policy on settlements, which breaches international law as well as the obligations of Israel under the road map.

Indonesia has always been of the view that achieving the objectives of the parties in the conflict is neither unrealistic nor unrealizable. The fact that a mountain is difficult to climb does not put it beyond conquest. That depends on the commitment of the mountaineers.

The Secretary-General has stated that peace and Palestinian statehood are long overdue. Indonesia agrees, and would like to amplify on that. Like him, we fully believe that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution that fulfils the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians, including an end to the occupation and conflict and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees. The problem is that all of that remains at the level of sentiment and rhetoric as long as the Government of Israel proceeds with policies that can only maintain the status quo.

We agree with the Secretary-General that, in view of the dramatic developments in the region, progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track is of tremendous urgency and that we are increasingly moving away from a two-State solution into a one-State reality. Such a prospect is very grim, and we must all come together and make certain that we return to the path that leads to the negotiating table, beginning with efforts to rebuild mutual confidence. To that end, we once again call on Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to avoid contravening its obligations under the road map to

freeze all settlement construction, including natural growth, and to dismantle all the outposts. We reiterate that those policies simply compound the challenges and amount to deliberate hurdles on the road.

Finally, Indonesia wishes to state that, while it will continue to support a two-State solution, such a solution can succeed only if it is comprehensive and includes both the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks. Towards that end, Indonesia again calls on Israel to withdraw completely from the occupied Lebanese land, as well as from the occupied Syrian Golan, and comply fully with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

On the current situation in Syria, my delegation wishes to thank Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, for his briefing to the Assembly this morning. We continue to witness, in Syria, worsening violence and an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe on the ground, with the international community in paralysis as to how to respond. In the view of Indonesia, that represents a challenge to us to commence, as a matter of urgency, earnest work aimed at ensuring the end of the violence and to address the dire humanitarian needs of the people. We must also, without delay, start a political process aimed at finding solutions that are in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the situation in the Middle East. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In adopting resolution 67/19 yesterday, the Assembly took a historic decision by admitting Palestine into its family as a non-member observer State. The decision coincided with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We congratulate President Mahmoud Abbas and the people of Palestine on that historic verdict by the Assembly. The decision is a step in the right direction. It is a step towards acceptance of the realities on the ground, and it should be a step towards recognition of Palestine as a full Member in the United Nations.

Pakistan was one of the sponsors of resolution 67/19. The Assembly's decision came after a bloody week of killings in Palestine and a very welcome ceasefire. We condemn the killings. Sophisticated weapons — warships, aircraft, artillery and missiles — were used against the people of Gaza. The military campaign left over 160 dead and more than 1,200 injured in Gaza. It has left behind a trail of destruction that has worsened the humanitarian situation. However, that recurring phenomenon must end. We urge the international community to take immediate and effective steps to ensure that violence does not erupt again.

But today, let us not talk only about violence, death and destruction. Let us talk about peace, security and stability in the region. Let us talk about resumption of the peace process and full engagement between Palestine and Israel.

Some countries were disappointed by the General Assembly's decision last evening. They thought that it was a unilateral action. The fact is that the people of Palestine have waited for far too long to exercise their right to self-determination and for recognition of their legitimate statehood. It is our earnest hope and appeal that following yesterday's decision there will be no reprisals or retaliation against Palestine. The people of Palestine need compassion and solidarity, not estrangement and punishment. We hope that instead of punitive measures, the emphasis will now shift to resuming dialogue on implementing the agreed two-State solution.

Serious doubts have recently been expressed about the viability of the two-State solution, and there has been talk of a one-State solution. As noted by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the status quo would delay the two-State solution and might usher in a one-State reality with unpredictable consequences, and, may I say, disastrous consequences. Similar concern is expressed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/364). As the window of opportunity for a two-State solution continues to narrow, it is urgent to reactivate the Middle East peace process, based on internationally agreed terms of reference, including Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and the Madrid principles.

For a serious quest for peace and a two-State solution, the construction of illegal settlements must cease. The Secretary-General has noted that 43 per cent of the West Bank has been allocated to local and regional settlement councils, with the result that

those areas are off-limits to Palestinians, leaving the Palestinian territory divided into enclaves with little or no territorial contiguity. Israel must heed the Secretary-General's call to freeze all settlement activity, in line with the Quartet road map.

The blockade of Gaza is a violation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). We call for an end to the policy of collective punishment being meted out to 1.5 million Palestinians.

The immobility of the Quartet leaves the people of Palestine with little hope. The winds of change blowing through the wider Middle East region demand fair and just dispensation for the Palestinians in terms of their destiny.

Pakistan believes that comprehensive peace in the Middle East will remain elusive without the creation of an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including through Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese territories and the Syrian Golan, is the only guarantee of sustainable peace in the region.

The dark night of suffering of the people of Palestine must end now. A Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with its neighbours is the only guarantee of security and stability in the region. The international community must rise to deliver justice.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate under this item.

I would like to inform members that action on draft resolutions A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24 will be taken after we take action on draft resolutions A/67/L.17, L.18, L.19 and L.20, under agenda item 37.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 36.

Agenda item 37 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Draft resolutions (A/67/L.17, A/67/L.18, A/67/L.19 and A/67/L.20)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 37, entitled "Question of Palestine", to take action on draft resolutions A/67/L.17, A/67/L.18, A/67/L.19 and A/67/L.20. Before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolutions, one by one, members are reminded that they will have an opportunity to explain their vote on all four before and after action is taken on all of the draft resolutions.

I give the floor to Israel on a point of order.

Mr. Magid (Israel): I call for a recorded vote on all of the draft resolutions.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/67/L.17, A/67/L.18, A/67/L.19 and A/67/L.20.

We turn first to draft resolution A/67/L.17, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/67/L.17, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.17. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and

the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/67/L.17 was adopted by 106 votes to 7, with 56 abstentions (resolution 67/20).

The Acting President: We turn next to draft resolution A/67/L.18, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/67/L.18, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.18: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Brunei Darussalam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.18. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga,

Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/67/L.18 was adopted by 103 votes to 7, with 61 abstentions (resolution 67/21).

The Acting President: We turn next to draft resolution A/67/L.19, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/67/L.19, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.19: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Brunei Darussalam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.19. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, El Salvador, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/67/L.19 was adopted by 160 votes to 7, with 7 abstentions (resolution 67/22).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.20, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to inform the Assembly that, since the introduction of draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/67/L.20, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.20: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam and Burkina Faso.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.20. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Cameroon, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Tonga

Draft resolution A/67/L.20 was adopted by 163 votes to 6, with 5 abstentions (resolution 67/23).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote on the resolutions just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lee (Singapore): Singapore voted in favour of resolution 67/20 on the understanding that the reference in paragraph 2 to "the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders" should be interpreted in the same manner as set out in paragraph 1 of resolution 67/23, which is "the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders".

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 36 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/342 and A/67/364)

Draft resolutions (A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/67/L.23 and A/67/L.24. We turn first to draft resolution A/67/L.23, entitled "Jerusalem".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/67/L.23, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.23: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.23. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/67/L.23 was adopted by 162 votes to 7, with 6 abstentions (resolution 67/24).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/67/L.24 is entitled "The Syrian Golan".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, in addition to the delegations listed in document A/67/L.24, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.24. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

(Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/67/L.24 was adopted by 110 votes to 6, with 59 abstentions (resolution 67/25).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote on the resolutions just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Fernandes (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Argentina and Brazil to explain our votes, as we have in previous years, on resolution 67/25, on the Syrian Golan, just now adopted by the General Assembly.

Brazil and Argentina voted in favour of the resolution because they believe that its essential character is linked to the illegitimacy of the acquisition of territory by force. Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity of a State.

At the same time, I want to clarify the position of our delegations with respect to paragraph 6 of the resolution. Our vote does not prejudge the content of that paragraph, particularly the reference to "the line of 4 June 1967". Brazil and Argentina believe that it is important to make progress in the search for a solution to the Syrian-Israeli track of the Middle East conflict, so as to put an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights.

Therefore, on behalf of the Governments of Brazil and Argentina, I once again stress the importance of resuming negotiations in order to find a definitive solution to the situation in the Syrian Golan, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

I now give the floor to the observer of the observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I want to thank all of my colleagues who gave the State of Palestine this wonderful reception. I am delighted to hear you, Sir, introducing our participation as the State of Palestine.

Yesterday was a historic day for the Palestinian people, for the State of Palestine and for all those who support peace and justice in the Middle East. It was a historic day for the United Nations; it was a historic day for all of us in the Assembly Hall. There is no way for me to describe the enthusiasm that the General Assembly demonstrated yesterday in receiving our President, listening to him, legislating in this Hall the recognition of the State of Palestine and changing our status to that of a non-member observer State. Indeed that was a historic day and an historic action, which was received by our people in the streets of the occupied Palestinian territory, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians joyfully celebrated the historic development.

In the name of the Palestinian people and in the name of the State of Palestine, I want to thank all those who sponsored resolution 67/19 and the other resolutions adopted today under the item "Question of Palestine" and on Jerusalem. We are also very grateful to all those who voted in favour. They made history yesterday and reiterated the principled positions in the resolutions adopted today.

There are many people we can thank, including those who were very instrumental in the collection of sponsors. Among them is a person special to us, Mr. Morsi from the Arab League, who has been here for many years and has been an outstanding friend of the State of Palestine. We want to thank him from the seat of the non-member observer State of Palestine in the United Nations.

Today is the day after. Yesterday, when we promoted our draft resolution in connection with our status at the United Nations, we were contributing to saving the two-State solution, contributing to saving peace and contributing to opening doors to the possibility of creating an atmosphere that is conducive to negotiations with Israel to end the occupation that started in 1967 and to allow for the independence of our State. On the day after, we very sincerely hope that we can give this option of peace a chance. We hope not to continue with the option of denying the rights of the Palestinian people in order to continue to occupy them and impose wars on them, such as we saw ten days ago during the war against our people in the Gaza Strip.

The reaction of the Israeli Government was an immediate provocation, an immediate declaration regarding building 3,000 illegal housing units and expanding their illegal settlements. They are trying to provoke us to react in some way. I do not know how they expect us to react, but the international community reiterated its position that settlements are an illegal obstacle to peace and need to be stopped immediately. We thus expect the international community — not only the General Assembly, but also the Security Council — to uphold international law and bring Israel into compliance. They are unilaterally creating illegal facts on the ground, and they are unilaterally taking measures that are in contravention of the provisions of international law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention.

For our part, having submitted that proposal with a view to opening doors to peace, we will continue to extend our hand in peace, but the continued provocation, testing our resolve and our determination, must have limits. We are ready and willing, if the other side is ready, to negotiate in good faith on the basis of the well-known terms of reference of the peace process. If they respect and uphold international law, then perhaps we can open doors for peace to move forward.

The insistence on the option of war and destruction, violating the law, building illegal settlements, stealing our land, destroying our homes, displacing our people and building walls — these things need to be stopped, and stopped immediately, because they are not things that will create an atmosphere that will allow us to negotiate to end the occupation and to achieve the independence of our State.

The choice is theirs. If they want to move in the direction of peace, our message and the message of our President were crystal-clear yesterday. We will be working together, with the international community, to collectively bring those who are violating international law, the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, human rights law and humanitarian law into compliance. We should do so if we want to open the path of peace, put an end to the agony and tragedy of our people, liberate them from the shackles of occupation and allow us to acquire our independence. More provocations would be testing our resolve. The message that we pushed yesterday should be the message that they should listen to and take seriously into consideration if they want to move in the direction of peace with us.

I again want to thank all those who have supported our resolutions and who made history with us yesterday in making the reality of the two States legally, politically and diplomatically accepted by the General Assembly. One State came into being in 1948. The Assembly legislated its recognition of the other State through yesterday's well-known resolution 67/19 and gave it a non-member observer seat in the General Assembly with a view to, one day soon, it becoming a full Member of the United Nations.

A majority of more than two thirds of the members of the Assembly voted in favour of that resolution yesterday. In fact, 71.5 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations voted in favour of our resolution. If we do not count those that abstained, we received the votes of 93 per cent of those that were present and voting in the Assembly.

We believe that this is a massive message to the Security Council, calling on it to favourably recommend to the General Assembly the acceptance of the State of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations. We hope that the Security Council will rise to the occasion and listen to this massive message from the Assembly, which is awaiting the recommendation to allow the State of Palestine to become a full Member and for our State's flag to be put in its alphabetical place in front of this building so that we can open a new chapter of the relationship between us and our neighbour, the State of Israel, and move in the direction of peace and development. Again, our hand is extended in peace, but we need the other side to reciprocate in the same spirit.

With that message, and on the eve of the holiday season, we want to thank the Assembly again very much for its support, and we hope that very soon, if we come back to the General Assembly, it will be in order to vote to grant the State of Palestine full membership.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its sincere and deep appreciation and gratitude to the General Assembly for its adoption — every year without exception since 1981, and by a majority of the voices promoting right, justice and law — of the resolutions entitled "The Syrian Golan", this year resolution 67/25, as well as other draft resolutions under the items concerning the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. The international community's continued support for such resolutions is a clear expression of Member States' commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, their rejection of foreign occupation and their support for our right to recover the Syrian territories that have been occupied by Israel since 5 June 1967.

The overwhelming majority of the vote in favour of these resolutions sends a clear message from the international community to Israel and its politicians to the effect that occupation, murder, policies of expansion and aggression, racial discrimination, the establishment of settlements, the imposition of a fait accompli and the forcible annexation of other people's lands are all repugnant practices that violate every international instrument and norm, foremost among them clearly the Charter of the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Thus, the fate of all such practices is denunciation and condemnation by the international community in the General Assembly.

I would like once again to express my country's thanks to all the sponsors of resolution 67/25, entitled "The Syrian Golan", and to those who voted in favour of it, and to reiterate our call for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace, based on international legal resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), as well as the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. I would also like to stress Syria's unshakeable determination to liberate the entire Golan to the pre-occupation borders of 4 June 1967 and to remove all illegal settlements there, in accordance with all means of international law, in whose headquarters we meet today.

It is regrettable that certain countries that have been frequent advocates for human rights and the protection of civilians and international law have imposed sanctions on my country and have besieged it on that pretext, while failing to vote on resolutions that would end the Israeli occupation of part of our national homeland in the Golan, resolutions concerning Syrian citizens who have long suffered under occupation.

Some countries voted against the resolutions on both the Syrian Golan and the question of Palestine, which enjoy unprecedented international support. That only proves what we have often said, which is that the actions of the representatives of those countries do not match their words or reflect good faith. This is mere political hypocrisy and a way of dealing with important issues — such as the occupied Golan and the question of Palestine — that is based on double standards, an extreme bias in Israel's favour and a logic of aggression in international relations. Israel would not have persisted with its occupation of Arab territories if it were not for the direct support that its policies of occupation and aggression receive from those who abstained or voted against the resolution on the occupied Golan. Thus, those countries that are not on the side of the provisions of the Charter and international law also bear responsibility for the consequences of the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 36.

Programme of work

The Acting President: Before concluding, I would like to inform members that consideration of agenda item 35, "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", originally scheduled for Monday, 17 December 2012, has been postponed to a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.